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Would Ease Restraints On Spying

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President Carter, accusing the Soviet Union of casting a threatening shadow over the Middle East oil fields, warned last night that he is prepared to use military force to turn back a Soviet attack on the Persian Gulf area.

Using his annual State of the Union address to Congress as the platform for laying out his strategic response to Soviet aggression on the edge of the world's richest oil reservoir, Carter drew a line and warned the Soviets not to cross it.

"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America," the president declared, "and such an assault will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force."

To underscore his words, the president announced that he plans to reactivate the Selective Service System for military registration of young men between the ages of 18 and 26 in case the need for mobilization arises.

He also called on Congress to give prompt approval to a new charter that would remove "unwarranted restraints" on the activities of U.S. intelligence agencies and to reaffirm the 1959 U.S. commitment to Pakistan's security.

It was not the first time the president has vowed to use military action to protect vital American interests in the Persian Gulf, but last night's stern and serious ultimatum to the Kremlin was set in a major foreign policy address that some are calling the "Carter Doctrine," a label the White House has been resisting.

Although Carter's tough stance could lead to a military confrontation with the Soviet Union, and to the possibility of nuclear war, he explained why the nation must take that risk.

Noting that the Persian Gulf region holds two-thirds of the world's exportable oil, Carter said, "The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz — a waterway through which much of the free world's oil must flow. The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position. Therefore, it poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil."

Denouncing the Soviet Union's "radical and aggressive new step" of invading Afghanistan, Carter said Moscow must realize that its action will be "costly to every political and economic relationship it values."

He said the world's condemnation of the Soviet move is not enough. "The Soviet Union must pay a concrete price for their aggression," the president said. "While this invasion continues, we and the other nations of the world cannot continue business as usual with the Soviet Union."

In addition to the economic and political sanctions he already has imposed against the Soviets, the president said in the coming months he will be working to "further strengthen political and military ties" with other countries in the region. He said the administration would arrange for U.S. naval and air facilities in the region of Northeast Africa and the Persian Gulf.

Congress, like the country as a whole, is in a patriotic mood these days because of the hostage crisis in Iran and the Soviet move into Afghanistan, and the members gave Carter the warmest State of the Union reception of his three-year-old presidency.

Twenty times they interrupted his speech with applause.

They applauded his call for military registration, his vow to keep

American athletes away from the Moscow Olympics, his promise to use military force to keep the Soviets out of the Persian Gulf region, his proposal to ease restrictions on the CIA, his bigger defense budget and his warning that Iran will pay a "severe" price if harm comes to any of the 50 American hostages.

White House aides earlier in the day said Carter's address was intended to set forth a long-range U.S. strategic response to the Soviet threat to the Persian Gulf and not to sound a "bugle call" for national mobilization.

"This is not an acute crisis," one senior administration official told reporters last night. "We are not headed for an immediate confrontation with the Soviet Union."

Still, some administration aides acknowledged that the president's decision to begin military registration could heighten tensions somewhat on the homefront.

Carter said in his speech that he is convinced that voluntary military forces are "adequate for our current defense needs" and that he hopes it will not become necessary to bring back the draft.

"However," he added, "we must be prepared for that possibility. For this reason, I have determined that the Selective Service system must now be revitalized. I will send legislation and budget proposals to the Congress next month so that we can begin registration and then meet future mobilization needs rapidly if they arise."

Administration officials said Carter has not decided whether to ask Congress to include women in the military registration. Last year, Defense Secretary Harold Brown told Congress that the draft, if it is resumed, should apply to women as well as men.

Carter also asked Congress for quick passage of a new charter for U.S. intelligence agencies "to define clearly the legal authority and accountability."

He cited the need "to remove unwarranted restraints on America's ability to collect intelligence" and tighten controls over sensitive intelligence information.

An administration official explained that the president is concerned that too many congressional committees — and their staffs — are privy to information gathered by the intelligence community.